

News and Information

from the Tennessee Division of Consumer Affairs

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 15, 1999

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DIVISION REPORTS NEW RECORD BY RETURNING OVER \$2.3 MILLION TO CONSUMERS IN 1998

The Tennessee Division of Consumer Affairs announced today that 1998 was another record breaking year for consumer restitution. Year-end statistics revealed that the Division was instrumental in helping return more than \$2.3 million dollars to consumers compared to just more than \$2 million in 1997, which was the previous high.

"I am pleased that in our ongoing efforts to become a more business-friendly state, Tennessee continues to protect its consumers," said Governor Don Sundquist about the figures.

Mark Williams, director of the Tennessee Division of Consumer Affairs, continued. "We are excited to take part in helping return such a large amount in restitution to consumers. Additional thanks must go to the Office of the Attorney General, which handles all of our formal actions," Williams stated.

The exact amount returned to consumers in 1998 was \$2,385,494.09. This figure includes restitution by mediated written complaints and by formal actions with the Office of the Attorney General.

The number one complaint category remained business opportunities. this category includes multi-level marketing plans, pyramid schemes, and work at home opportunities.

Additionally, the past four years have seen a record amount returned to consumers, topping any four previous years in the Division's history. total restitution to consumers from 1995 through 1998 is \$6,671,416.

Below are 1998's top ten complaint categories.

1. Business Opportunity
2. Debtor / Creditor
3. Home Improvements
4. Auto Repair
5. Utilities
6. Mail Order
7. Used Car Sales
8. Promotions & Contests
9. Telemarketing
10. Travel & Transportation